

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 IGA-01 AID-05 EB-07 MC-02 AGR-05 COME-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-10 SY-04 PER-01 OPR-01 /085 W

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O P 251220Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9509

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

COMUSSAG NKP THAI PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

CINCPAC PA LNO BANGKOK THAI PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 3455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, CB

SUBJECT: CAMBODIA CIVILIAN RICE/POL AIRLIFT

REF: STATE 41774

1. DCM BRIEFED BURGEONING FOREIGN MEDIA CORPS THIS MORNING AT EMBASSY ON RATIONALE AND DETAILS OF FORTHCOMING CIVILIAN RICE/POL AIRLIFT. TWENTY-THREE CORRESPONDENTS ATTENDED BRIEFING. PURPOSE OF BRIEFING WAS TO: (A) ANSWER ANTICIPATED QUERIES FOLLOWING DISCLOSURE OF PLANNED AIRLIFT YESTERDAY IN WASHINGTON (REFTEL); AND (B) ENCOURAGE AS ACCURATE NEWS COVERAGE FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE. FACTUAL ASPECTS OF BRIEFING WERE "ON THE RECORD." FOLLOWING IS RECAPITULATION OF INFORMATION RELEASED AND RELATED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

2. FACTS. AN UP TO THIRTY-DAY TAN SON NHUT-TO-POCHENTONG
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RICE AIRLIFT WILL BEGIN ON FEB. 27 USING THE THREE DC-8

CIVILIAN CHARTER AIRCRAFT WHICH HAVE BEEN AIRLIFTING AMMUNITION FROM UTAPAO FOR THE KHMER ARMED FORCES DURING THE PAST ELEVEN DAYS. THE LATTER AIRLIFT WILL END FEB. 26, BUT THE AUGMENTED BIRD C-130 AIRLIFT WILL CONTINUE TO BRING IN AMMUNITION AND MILITARY POL AND OTHER SUPPLIES FROM UTAPAO. ON MARCH 1 AN ADDITIONAL DC-8 CIVILIAN CHARTER AIRCRAFT WILL BE ADDED TO THE RICE AIRLIFT FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM, TO MAKE POSSIBLE A DAILY TOTAL OF THIRTEEN SHUTTLE FLIGHTS INTO POCHENTONG FROM TAN SON NHUT BY THE FOUR AIRCRAFT. A FIFTH DC-8 WILL BE IN PLACE AT UTAPAO ON MARCH 4.

3. THE RICE TO BE AIRLIFTED HAS ALREADY BEEN PURCHASED BY THE GKR UNDER TERMS OF A PL 480 TITLE I AGREEMENT. THE DC-8'S WILL OPERATE UNDER A DOD CONTRACT BUT THE AIRLIFT'S ESTIMATED FIVE AND ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLAR COST WILL BE PAID FOR BY USAID'S CIP FUNDS AND DOD WILL BE REIMBURSED THROUGH A TRANSFER OF FUNDS. THIS IS NOT A WHOLLY INCREMENTAL EXPENSE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE COST AT LEAST THIRTY-THREE DOLLARS PER TON TO BRING THE RICE UP THE MEKONG ANYWAY BY SHIP CONVOY. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT NOW HAVE A PRECISE FIGURE ON THE PER-TON COST OF AIRLIFTING THE RICE. (CORRESPONDENTS WERE CAUTIONED AGAINST USING THE FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS PER-TON COST FIGURE WHICH HAS BEEN QUOTED FOR FLYING IN AMMUNITION FROM UTAPAO BY DC-8.) THE DC-8 RICE PAYLOAD IS EXPECTED TO BE FORTY-FIVE TO FORTY-EIGHT SHORT TONS PER FLIGHT. WITH THIRTEEN SHUTTLE FLIGHTS DAILY THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF RICE BROUGHT IN EACH DAY WILL BE FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE TO SIX HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOUR SHORT TONS. THIS IS ABOUT EQUAL TO WHAT WE ESTIMATED IS THE DAILY RICE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT FOR PHNOM PENH AND OTHER POPULATION CENTERS IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC SUPPLIED FROM THE CAPITAL.

4. A CIVIL SECTOR POL AIRLIFT WILL BEGIN ON MARCH 4. TWO BIRD AIR C-130S WILL BRING THE POL IN FROM UTAPAO MAKING SIX SHUTTLE FLIGHTS PER DAY ALTOGETHER. A TOTAL OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY CUBIC METERS (31,680 GALLONS) OF POL WILL ARRIVE EACH DAY, ALL OF ITS DESTINED FOR CIVIL

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SECTOR USE. THE POL WILL BE TRANSPORTED IN RUBBER BLADDERS ON THE C-130S AND WILL BE PUMPED DIRECTLY INTO TANK TRUCKS UPON ARRIVAL AT POCHENTONG.

5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON THE AIRLIFT AND OTHER TOPICS WAS ALSO GIVEN IN RESPONSE TO NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS.

(A) MAP CB-FUNDED POL FOR FANK USE WILL

CONTINUE TO BE BROUGHT IN FROM UTAPAO BY BIRD AIR C-130S.

(B) THE TWO C-130S WHICH WILL BE BRINGING IN POL FOR CIVIL USE ARE PART OF THE TWELVE BIRD AIR C-130S BEING USED TO BRING IN MILITARY SUPPLIES. C-130S ARE BEING USED BECAUSE IT WOULD COST MORE TO CONFIGURE DC-8S TO TRANSPORT POL. THE COST OF BRINGING IN THE CIVILIAN-USE POL FROM UTAPAO IN THE BIRD AIR C-130S WILL BE PAID FOR BY REIMBURSEMENT OF DOD BY AID.

(C) THE FIVE AND ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLAR FIGURE CITED ABOVE INCLUDES THE COSTS OF BOTH THE RICE AND THE POL AIRLIFTS.

(D) FANK IS WORKING HARD TO ENSURE CONTINUED OPERATION OF POCHENTONG BY HITTING THE KC POSITIONS IN THE "ROCKET BELT" NORTHWEST OF THE AIRFIELD.

(E) (IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY ABOUT REP. ASPIN'S REPORTED CHARGE THAT \$118 MILLION IS BEING SPENT IN THAILAND FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MAP CB PROGRAM): A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT ARE DONE OUTSIDE CAMBODIA IN THE WAY OF MILITARY SUPPORT ARE CHARGED TO MAP-CB, E.G., TRAINING, REPAIR, MAINTENANCE, TRANSPORT, ETC.

(F) USG IS NOT PAYING FOR WAR-RISK INSURANCE WHICH WE ASSUME AIRCRAFT CHARTER COMPANIES HAVE HAD WRITTEN ON THEIR DC-8S. USAID FURTHERMORE, HAS NOT HAD TO PROVIDE INDEMNIFICATION FOR LOSSES WHICH SHIP OWNERS HAVE SUFFERED ON THE MEKONG.

(G) WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AIRLIFTS WILL BE ABLE TO MEET CAMBODIA'S IMMEDIATE NEEDS. THE RECENT TWELVE-DAY EMERGENCY AMMUNITION AIRLIFT HAS BUILT UP FANK STOCKS. THE AIRLIFTS ARE INTERIM MEASURES ONLY, HOWEVER. WE HOPE THE MEKONG WILL BE REOPENED SOON. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR AN EXTENDED AIRLIFT OF ALL SUPPLIES. (ON BACKGROUND: WE HAVE ALREADY NEARLY RUN OUT OF MAP MONEY, AND ARE BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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FORCED TO PAY FOR THE CURRENT AMMUNITION AIRLIFT BY DE-OBLIGATING FUNDS, I.E., CANCELLING ORDERS FOR SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT ALREADY REQUESTED UNDER AVAILABLE MAP MONEY. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE OF COURSE SOME MAP SUPPLIES STILL IN THE PIPELINE. WE ARE NOT YET IN SUCH DIFFICULT STRAITS WITH REGARD TO THE CIVIL SECTOR.)

(H) WE ARE NOT MOVING INTO A HIGHER PHASE OF EVACUATION PLANNING NOR ARE WE CONTEMPLATING REDUCING OFFICIAL EMBASSY STAFF. WE HOPE THAT THE CONGRESS WILL APPROVE THE SUPPLEMENTAL AID REQUEST.

(I) SENATOR BARTLETT AND REP. MCCLOSKEY ARRIVED IN SAIGON FEB 24. ANOTHER GROUP OF CONGRESSMEN IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN SAIGON ON THURSDAY. (ON BACKGROUND: WE VERY MUCH HOPE THEY WILL ALL BE COMING

HERE.)
DEAN

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Message Attributes

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